

KODAIKANAL SCHOOL,  
KODAIKANAL-624 101,  
SOUTH INDIA,  
November 19, 1985.

PIPPA MUKHERJEE

[Snakes identified as of this species have been noted (*JBNHS* 12 p. 589) to glide from a tree on one side of the road to a lower one on the other side, and another note (*JBNHS* 56 p. 640) tells of

one that travelled similarly for an estimated distance of 55 yards from tree to tree down a hill side.  
— Editors.]

## 22. VARIATIONS OF COLOUR PATTERN IN THE NECKTIE LOACH, *BOTIA DARIO* (HAM.-BUCH.)

(With a plate)

The necktie loach, *Botia dario*, was first described by Hamilton-Buchanan in 1822, who named it *Cobitis dario*. Its normal coloration is a series of 7-8 obliquely vertical bands descending from back to abdomen, and sloping slightly backward. On each lobe of the caudal fin there are three or more thin black bands. As with all species of *Botia*, the scales are very small and indistinct. Its fin-ray count is:-

D. 3/9-10; V. 1/7; P. 14; A. 2/5-6; C. 19.

An allied species, *Botia geto*, also first described by Hamilton-Buchanan in 1822, has often been confused with *B. dario*. While he considered it to be a distinct species, Gunther (1868, *Cat. Fish Brit. Mus.* vii: 366) regarded it as a young form of *B. dario*. Day (1872) considered the former as a doubtful synonym of the latter, but later (in 1878 and 1889) thought them to be two distinct species. Hora (1922) included Day's references of 1878 and 1889 to *B. geto* in the synonymy of *Botia birdi* Chaudhuri (1909). Later (in 1932), Hora considered that two of the specimens referred to by Day as *B. geto* were young forms of *B. dario*, while one of Day's specimens from Sind named by him (Day) as *B. geto* was named

by Hora as a new species, *B. dayi*. (The specimens collected by Dr. B. S. Lamba from Mahableshwar, and wrongly identified as *B. dayi* by Babu Rao & Yazdani, are actually *Botia striata*).

While the caudal peduncle in *B. dario* tapers posteriorly, in *B. dayi* it is squarish. While in *B. dario*, the eyes are situated almost in the posterior half of the head, in *B. geto* they are not situated wholly in the posterior half of the head. In *B. dario* the eyes are moderately large, their diameter being contained 3 times in the length of the snout, while in *B. birdi* they are small, their diameter being contained 4 to 4.5 times in the length of the snout.

*Botia dario* has been collected from Cachar, Meghalaya, Northern Bengal and Bangladesh. In the present collection from Silchar, although the predominant pattern of obliquely vertical, parallel bands are easily distinguishable, many specimens exhibit deviations from this pattern. In some cases two bands coalesce at their lower extremities, in others they join in the middle to form an H, while a few have some of the bands in the shape of the letter Y, which is characteristic of *Botia lohachata*.

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E-31, CUSROW BAUG,  
COLABA CAUSEWAY,  
BOMBAY-400 039,  
April 23, 1986.

B. F. CHHAPGAR

REFERENCES

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CHHAPGAR, B. F. & SANE, S. R. (1980): Comments on the first record of *Botia* (Pisces: Cobitidae) from the Western Ghats by Rao & Yazdani. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 76(3): 525-528, fig. 1.  
DAY, F. (1872): Monograph of Indian Cyprinidae. Part II. *Journ. Asiatic Soc. Bengal* 41: 177.  
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HORA, S. L. (1922): Notes on fishes in the Indian Museum. IV. On fishes belonging to the genus *Botia* (Cobitidae). *Rec. Ind. Mus.* 24: 313-321, 1 fig.  
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23. 'BANAS' FISHING IN BEELS OF ASSAM

(With a text-figure)

'Banass' fishing was introduced in Dhir beel, district Dhubri, Assam, by Bihari fishermen in late sixties and the method met with tremendous success which led the other beel fishermen adopting this technique. Dhir beel is connected to river Brahmaputra by a channel. The channel plays a pivotal role during monsoon, when, with the current, adults and juveniles of various species enter the beel for breeding, feeding, temporary migration, etc. With the waning monsoon, the current starts receding towards the river and many species undertake their return journey and at this stage the 'Banass' fishing commences.

METHOD

(a) *Selection of site*: The channel connecting the beel to the river is c. 3.5 Km, in

length. During winter and premonsoon periods the channel (Fig. 1) maintains its contour while during monsoon the entire surrounding area is inundated and the channel also loses its shape, leaving a narrow constriction at the point where the National highway 31 crosses the channel. It is here that the 'Banass' are erected and the reasons for selecting the site are:

- (a) N.H. 31 runs on the south bank.
  - (2) On the north-west small hillocks prevent spreading of water.
  - (3) Construction of bridge over the N.H. has narrowed the width of the channel.
  - (4) Proximity of N.H. facilitates transport and marketing of fishes.
- (b) *Preparation and erection of Banass*: Locally available giant variety of bamboo are cut into thin strips and closely woven with coir